



# SCOTT FITZGERALD

## SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 27, 2016

Contact: Scott Fitzgerald, (608)-266-5660

### **Fitzgerald: Democrats' Red Herring Attack on School Choice**

[**Madison, WI**] Last week, Wisconsin Democrats released a series of attacks on Wisconsin's school choice program, arguing that recent reforms have increased spending on voucher students at the expense of Wisconsin's public schools. Not only did this argument use incomplete data to attempt to describe funding totals for recent years, but this comparison intentionally ignores the facts, presenting an apples-to-oranges comparison of two very different funding mechanisms.

We wanted a full picture of Wisconsin's K-12 education spending and requested the attached memo from the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau. This memo revealed a much more accurate picture of how much Wisconsin truly spends on voucher students. For the most recent school year (2015-16):

Total State Spending on Public Schools:	\$10,099,200,000
Total State Spending on School Choice:	\$229,900,000
Percentage of State School Spending on Choice:	2.2%

Yes, you're reading that right. Less than three percent of total state spending on schools goes to Wisconsin's choice program—and this figure doesn't even include federal aid, which only goes to public schools.

If this weren't enough, the most recently available enrollment totals (2014-15) demonstrate how many children currently participate in the choice program:

Number of Pupils in Public Schools:	854,419
Number of Pupils in Choice Schools:	28,399
Percentage of Pupils Enrolled in Choice Schools:	3.2%

So while choice school participants make up 3.2% of total K-12 pupil enrollment, they only make up around 2% of the total state cost of K-12 education. Perhaps state democrats will keep these figures in mind the next time they want to attack the small percentage of Wisconsin families trying to provide a better educational opportunity for their children.

*Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau) represent the 13<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which covers portions of Dodge, Jefferson, Waukesha, Washington, Dane, and Columbia counties.*

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## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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June 27, 2016

TO: Senator Scott Fitzgerald  
Room 211 South, State Capitol

FROM: Christa Pugh, Fiscal Analyst

SUBJECT: Total Funding for and Enrollment in K-12 Education and Private School Choice Programs

At your request, I am providing information regarding total funding for the private school choice programs and K-12 education, as well as enrollment in the private school choice programs and public K-12 schools.

Under the private school choice programs, the state pays a statutorily-determined amount for each pupil attending a private school under the programs. The attachment shows the GPR appropriation amounts, aid reductions, and net GPR cost of the Milwaukee, Racine, and statewide private school choice programs from 2009-10 to 2016-17.

Since the beginning of the Milwaukee private school choice program, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has been required by law to reduce the general aid for which the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) is eligible in each year by a percentage of the estimated total cost of the program. In 2015-16, the percentage was 28.8%, and this percentage will be reduced by 3.2 percentage points each year until no aid reduction is made beginning in 2024-25.

Additionally, beginning in 2015-16, the full cost of payments for incoming pupils in the Racine and statewide private school choice programs (pupils who begin participating in those programs in the 2015-16 school year or later) is reduced from the general aids that would otherwise be paid to those pupils' school districts of residence. School districts are able to count those pupils for general aid purposes on a prior year basis, and receive a revenue limit adjustment for the current year. In 2015-16, the revenue limit adjustment for each pupil was equal to each district's base revenue per pupil. Beginning in 2016-17, the revenue limit adjustment will be equal to the amount of the aid reduction.

The attachment also shows the amounts appropriated for K-12 state aid payments in each year from 2009-10 to 2016-17, as well as the statewide gross school levy and the sum of state aid

payments and the school levy. Additionally, the attachment shows the number of pupils enrolled in each choice program and the number of pupils enrolled in K-12 public schools statewide.

I hope this information is helpful. Please let me know if you have additional questions.

CP/sas  
Attachment

# ATTACHMENT

## Total Cost of Private School Choice Programs and State Aid and School Levy for K-12 Public Schools 2009-10 to 2016-17 (\$ in Millions)

	<u>2009-10</u>	<u>2010-11</u>	<u>2011-12</u>	<u>2012-13</u>	<u>2013-14</u>	<u>2014-15</u>	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2016-17</u>
<b>Milwaukee Private School Choice Program</b>								
GPR	\$130.1	\$130.8	\$144.3	\$154.6	\$161.1	\$191.0	\$196.4	\$207.1
Aid Reduction	<u>54.1</u>	<u>50.2</u>	<u>55.4</u>	<u>59.4</u>	<u>56.7</u>	<u>61.1</u>	<u>56.6</u>	<u>53.0</u>
Net GPR	\$76.0	\$80.6	\$88.9	\$95.2	\$104.4	\$129.9	\$139.8	\$154.1
Enrollment	20,372	20,256	22,220	23,812	24,811	25,745	26,800*	27,800*
<b>Racine and Statewide Private School Choice Programs</b>								
GPR	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$1.6	\$3.2	\$10.8	\$22.0	\$33.5	\$45.0
Aid Reduction	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>16.1</u>	<u>27.0</u>
Net GPR	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$1.6	\$3.2	\$10.8	\$22.0	\$17.4	\$18.0
Racine Enrollment	0	0	219	488	1,169	1,660	2,100*	2,600*
Statewide Enrollment	0	0	0	0	499	994	2,500*	3,500*
<b>Choice Total</b>								
GPR	\$130.1	\$130.8	\$145.9	\$157.8	\$171.9	\$213.0	\$229.9	\$252.1
Aid Reduction	<u>54.1</u>	<u>50.2</u>	<u>55.4</u>	<u>59.4</u>	<u>56.7</u>	<u>61.1</u>	<u>72.7</u>	<u>80.0</u>
Net GPR	\$76.0	\$80.6	\$90.5	\$98.4	\$115.2	\$151.9	\$157.2	\$172.1
Enrollment	20,372	20,256	22,439	24,300	26,479	28,399	31,400	33,900
<b>Public K-12 Schools</b>								
State School Aid	\$5,315.4	\$5,325.0	\$4,983.5	\$4,964.4	\$5,079.2	\$5,241.7	\$5,244.5	\$5,444.6
Gross School Levy	<u>4,537.6</u>	<u>4,692.9</u>	<u>4,646.7</u>	<u>4,656.1</u>	<u>4,694.4</u>	<u>4,754.3</u>	<u>4,854.7</u>	<u>N.A.</u>
State Aid plus Levy	\$9,853.0	\$10,017.9	\$9,630.2	\$9,620.5	\$9,773.6	\$9,996.0	\$10,099.2	
Pupil Membership	858,205	857,273	855,327	856,147	856,955	854,419	N.A	N.A.

\*Estimated